

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 09702 091035Z

15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1967

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 9702

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK,HIN

SUBJ: BHUTTO CALLS FOR GENERAL STRIKE IN KASHMIR

REF: ISLAMABAD 9682

SUMMARY: BHUTTO HAS CALLED UPON PEOPLE OF BOTH INDIAN AND PAKISTANI KASHMIR TO HOLD NON-VIOLENT GENERAL STRIKE ON DATE WHICH HE WILL ANNOUNCE SHORTLY. ALLEGED PURPOSE WILL BE TO DEMONSTRATE TO WORLD THAT KASHMIR PEOPLE WISH TO ACCEDE TO PAKISTAN. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING FOURTH DAY OF HIS CURRENT POLITICAL TOUR OF AZAD KASHMIR, PRIMIN BHUTTO CLIMAXED HIS INCREASINGLY ACTIVIST POSTURE BY CALLING FOR GENERAL STRIKE OF ALL KASHMIRIS ON DATE WHICH HE WILL ANNOUNCE SHORTLY. AT
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 09702 091035Z

SUCCESSIVE PUBLIC MEETINGS IN VARIOUS AZAD KASHMIR

TOWNS ON NOVEMBER 8, BHUTTO OUTLINED AND EXPANDED ON HIS PROPOSAL.

2. AS PRIMIN DESCRIBED IT, IN SEVEN TO TEN DAYS' TIME HE WILL SPECIFY A PARTICULAR FRIDAY ON WHICH ALL KASHMIRIS SHOULD OBSERVE A GENERAL STRIKE (HARTAL). ALL SHIPS, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS SHOULD BE CLOSED ON THAT DAY, AND ALL NORMAL ACTIVITIES CURTAILED. PRIMIN ASKED THAT THERE BE NO MEETINGS OR PROCESSIONS DURING HARTAL, AND URGED THAT IT BE ENTIRELY NON-VIOLENT. SUCH A STRIKE, HE DECLARED, WOULD NOT BE CONTRARY TO PROVISIONS OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION OR INDIAN LAWS. ITS PURPOSE, HE SAID, WOULD BE TO DEMONSTRATE TO DELHI AND TO WORLD THAT PEOPLE OF KASHMIR ARE COMMITTED TO EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND THAT THEY WISH TO ACCEDE TO PAKISTAN. AFTER STRIKE HAD BEEN HELD, BHUTTO WOULD ASK GOI TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS WITH HIM OVER KASHMIR ISSUE. HE WOULD ALSO GO TO "THEWHOLE WORLD" AND POINT OUT THAT KASHMIR REMAINS A LIVE ISSUE WHICH CAN NO LONGER BE SHELVED.

3. IN COURSE OF REITERATING THIS PROPOSAL DURING SERIES OF NOVEMBER 8 MEETINGS, BHUTTO PAID TRIBUTE TO STUDENTS OF SRINAGAR WHO, ACCORDING LOCAL PRESS ACCOUNTS, WERE MANHANDLED BY POLICE WHILE PROTESTING AGAINST RENAMING OF LOCAL COLLEGE AFTER PANDIT NEHRU. HE WENT ON, HOWEVER, TO URGE THEM TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT, AND SUGGESTED THAT THEY NOT RESIST RENAMING OF COLLEGE SINCE NEHRU WAS "A GREAT PERSONALITY" OF SUBCONTINENT.

4. REITERATING THEME OF PREVIOUS DAYS, BHUTTO AGAIN STRESSED THAT GOP HAD RENOUNCED WAR AS MEANS OF BRINGING SELF-DETERMINATION TO KASHMIR. "WE DO NOT WANT WAR", HE SAID, BUT "WE ALSO DON'T WANT TO HOLD FRUITLESS TALKS. WHAT WE WANT IS THAT THE SOLUTION OF THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE BASED ON EQUITY AND JUSTICE." NOTING THAT PANDIT NEHRU HAD PROMISED A PLEBISCITE FOR KASHMIR, HE URGED PRIMIN GHANDI TO HONOR HER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 09702 091035Z

FATHER'S PROMISE.

5. BHUTTO ALSO TOOK OCCASION TO DENOUNCE THOSE CALLING FOR INDEPENDENT KASHMIR, SUGGESTING THAT THEY BE IGNORED. KASHMIR SHOULD NOT BECOME INDEPENDENT, HE ASSERTED, BUT COULD HAVE ADEQUATE AUTONOMY WITHIN PAKISTAN.

6. COMMENT: HARD TO FATHOM WHY BHUTTO HAS SEIZED
THIS OCCASION TO REVIVE LONG-DORMANT KASHMIR
ISSUE IN SUCH DRAMATIC MANNER, KNOWING THAT IT IS
SURE TO RILE DELHI AND PROVOKE INDIAN REJOINDER.
WE CAN HOPE THAT THIS NEW TACTIC WILL NOT FURTHER
COMPLICATE DELICATE MATTER OF COMPLETING THE CURRENT
EXCHANGES OF BENGALIS, NON-BENGALIS, AND POW'S. SOBER

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